

## QUEER CHRISTMAS STORY

Gratitude Carried to the Extreme of  
Committing Deliberate Murder.How the Threadbare Lawyer of Dogberry  
Row Gained Unexpected Fame and  
Fortune After Years of Want.

Naturally enough, no doubt, and still most unnaturally it seemed, his lot had fallen in the moist vicinity of Dogberry Row. A strange community had sprung up between him externally and Dogberry Row externally, and internally they were similar—sometimes gloomy and at other times still more gloomy. The faded suit hung to him, as a poor lawyer hangs to a poor case, while the gloss on the frictioned parts was particularly perceptible. A cork-screw diagonal was one time a favorite cloth in the row, when all sorts of long-tailed coats were cut of it, with jealous trousers twisted to their functions somewhat rebellious at the knees, but submissive elsewhere, and just a trifle short to meet the demands of an exacting suspender. He had fallen to the lot of such a suit of clothes that held him as mercilessly as did the row. When the court-house was building, he had rubbed a spot on his smoky pane, looked forth and thought of the days when he would plead before little fat judges in the gilded sanctuary, and file affidavits with the patronizing clerk below. Slowly huge stones had been piled upon each other, and splendidly had the structure assumed its present proportions before his waiting eyes. Still he had been a poor lawyer, and still he had maintained his insignificance as such, until the great parapets and bristling stone looked down upon, almost obliterating his identity with their impressiveness, and still he attacked the wheezy 'squires in Dogberry row, who had slowly, after years of solemn advisement, arrived at the conclusion that he was a chestnut and would forever remain one. He felt the depression of their unwritten verdict and apologized to himself, offering armies of extenuating circumstances that had had all to do with his condition. The little stove in his dingy office, or den, was larded with uisectine, and like the corpulent colonel of the firm of Squeezem & Son, emitted an aromatic odor when heated. Still the picture of Henry Clay hung behind his door, and a few books loaded on his shelves with every sign of that mendicancy to which they had been consigned for years.

Often at night, when the ether was cold, he had stood on the curbstones and shivered at the stars. Perhaps a horse would be shivering in its moorings while its owner was tied up above in the third story to the George H. Thomas Post. A flash of frozen water in the gutter would reflect the hectic gleam of the chilly moon, while the cold electric light near Tomlinson Hall scintillated, sputtered, and annoyed itself until midnight. Then it was that he would look into the cozy office of 'Squire Smoak and long for the certain annuity accruing from the discharge of perfunctory duties. For a moment the flicker goddess of his dreams would be filmed by the relapse, and his rother lip would tremble as he chanced to think of his sweet wife who kept the old fire burning in his burnt-out heart. Then another face might be seen lifting its fair young features through the haziness of his reflections, and the tears would come into his eyes as in fancy those chubby little arms pressed his neck and kissed him again and again. It was not every day and not every week, perhaps, that this unostentatious disciple of the law found another client. Now and then some poor devil on his way to the work-house stopped for help at his dingy room, and usually passed on to the end of his peccancy with slight anchorage. Every day the 'squires' nests on the row would open as early as the poorer shops, cast their cinders and cigar stubs to the world, preparing for another day's grist. About the first time in years this corkscrew lawyer had gone to sleep in his office and had not awakened until the rumble of early market-wagons jarred through his slumber, as the bright morning sun spilled a foggy light down his smoky windows. A loud knock at the door had completed his awakening in time to look upon the faded face of a young fellow well dressed, who stood looking at him with his hand on the knob. Slowly creating his neck and looking at him with his hand on the knob. Slowly creating his neck and looking at him with his hand on the knob. Slowly creating his neck and looking at him with his hand on the knob.

"Only rats," assured the yawning lawyer, pointing to a stool. "What can I do for you?"

Closing the door and taking the stool gently in his hand, the early visitor placed it near the poor lawyer, looked about the room searchingly, and, seating himself, said:

"You don't know me?"

"No."

"Well, I've known you for years!"

"Well?"

"You see it's a delicate subject, and I don't want to hurt your feelings."

Here the sleepy lawyer straightened himself up and looked his visitor square in the face.

"Several years ago, you remember, my brother, Zeke Kellum, got into a fight with Bob Purvis, on Buck creek, and you cleared him, and he never paid you, and you never dunned him?"

The poor lawyer was wide awake and amused.

"Now, you see, I always liked you for that, and concluded to do you a good turn. I haven't got any money, and never expect to have any to give to lawyers, but I can do a bigger thing for you. I've been on the lookout over two years for a play to your hand, and I've got it. Did you hear about the murder?"

"What murder do you mean?"

"Why, the Poque's run murder."

"Not a word."

"Last night Bill Wort and me got into a dispute over at Gihaley's saloon. We was both a little full, and I killed him with the marine swing. I wouldn't a hit him so hard, but I happened to think of you, and I let him have it in the neck, and he never said another word back. My gang was there, taking no part, but seeing the case done square. Wort was a bigoted cuss and thought he was making headway with the girl at the house, and I put a check on 'em. The next morning he was all right and you can square things with the jury if you get down to business and throw yourself. The girl at the house never made the tie for him, as she told me last night when she brought in the potatoes, and he had no right to throw suspicion on her."

"What house?"

"The boarding-house where we all bunked."

"O I see. What were the circumstances?"

"Hain't I just told you?"

"Have you been arrested yet?"

"No. Will be some time to-day. I made a sneak last night so as to see you early and get things on the run. Your wife said you hadn't come home, and thought you was out of town. Glad I caught you. See this thing will be ferreted out in the Criminal Court, and you will get a show for a big hit. So long."

"Where are you going?"

"To give myself up."

"Well, I'll be round and see you."

In the course of events the new sensation had been double-headed in the saloon, and in due course of time came to trial in the Criminal Court. The members of the bar saw that the poorest lawyer in the city represented the defendant. The Wort family gathered from every quarter of the earth, apparently, and concentrated their finances on the prosecution. After a long imprisonment in the county jail the prisoner appeared paler than before, at the bar of justice, and the great gathering of people in the Criminal Court room craned their necks to see a thin man, in a faded corkscrew suit, piloting the meat of the city's law fraternity, toward the State prison, as unerringly as ever across a stream.

The last day came and the evidence was all in. The jury-box was full of empty whiskers, and the judge leaned do

ingly to the counsel for the defendant who was paler than the prisoner. Then it was decided that the court would adjourn until after dinner, when the argument would begin. The court adjourned, and the prisoner was led back to his cell. In the afternoon a larger crowd was present. The prosecutor began facetiously and pounded the reporter's table often. Time went on, and at last the time came for the defendant's plea. The lawyer in the corkscrew suit heard the prisoner say, "drive it into 'em up to the hilt," and staggered to his feet. It was the supreme moment of his life. He looked at the jury, then at the judge, and, under the intense embarrassment to which he was subjected, turned mechanically and looked at the people crowded in the rear of the room. His eyes fell on his client, who was looking at him full of confidence. The quick glance stimulated him, and he addressed the judge, and jury calmly. It was with a struggle he uttered his first sentence. Then the atmosphere seemed clearer. He felt his mind more brilliant than ever before in his life. A feeling of peculiar self-importance and dignity came over him. He stood up straight. His gestures were made without any direction or knowledge. The eyes of every jurymen were riveted on him. He ran over the evidence as clearly as the fingers of a piano-player run over the keys, touching here and there that which brought a symphony for his client. Coming down to his plea for the prisoner, he felt doubtless like the leading horse on the stretch, with the wire full in view. Concluding, he saw every heart was with him and read on every face the joyous verdict. When he had taken his seat such a spontaneous applause followed that the judge pounded the tripod with his gavel like a pile-driver. In the afternoon of another day, a cold day, full of snow and storm-coats, a large man, with red whiskers and an enormous vest, opened the door and walked in on the poor lawyer. The poor lawyer was full of condescension and listened to the story of a father whose son had gone astray. The poor lawyer's fame had gone out of his district, for the old man was from Fort Wayne. Arrangements were consummated, but before the unhappy father left a beneficent advance fee was paid to the poor lawyer, who sent home a goose that night, with a luxurious cranberry auxiliary and a wreath of holly, whose green leaves glistened as though they had been varnished, and many a Christmas holiday was spent less merrily than the one which spilled its appetizing savors through the little home of the corkscrew lawyer of Dogberry row.

ALLAN BOTSFORD.

## OFFERINGS OF THE POETS.

**The End of the World.**  
An old man, weary and bent and gray,  
Came striding the village through,  
The laughing children cried "whither away?"  
And "where are you tramping to?"  
"I go to the end of the world," said he,  
"To the end of the world I fare;  
And wherever the end of the world may be  
My haven of rest is there."  
"Out from the shadows of ancient night,  
Forth from the darkness buried  
Into the light and through the light,  
And on to the end of the world."  
"But the world is round," quoth a little lass,  
"And your journey will be in vain."  
"Then answer me this, though many pass  
Do any return again?"  
And the light of his smile was slowly blent  
With the light of his snow-white hair,  
Till a ray of some pure, divine content  
Seemed writing its promise there.  
"O fair and sweet is the land that lies  
Just out from the end of the world;  
Green fields forever and love-lit skies  
Like banners that float unfurled."  
"You may scheme and struggle for power all  
day  
And dream of your gold all night;  
To the end of the world I will take my way,  
Nor turn to the left nor right."  
So speaking, he waved them a parting hand  
And turned to his weary quest  
For the end of the world, and the after land,  
And the haven of peace and rest.  
That evening a shepherd came over the hill  
To the brook where the alders bloom,  
And the twilight's perfumed drops distill  
'Mid shadows that cast no gloom.  
There found he the old man lying stark,  
With his long, white hair uncurled,  
"And here," he murmured, "through primal dark  
Has he reached the end of the world."  
—Benj. S. Parker.

**Marguerites.**  
Bathed in the sun's soft splendor, Marguerite,  
With lips a-tremble, like the shimmering wheat  
Whose mellow gold invites the reaper Death,  
Bends lowly o'er a flower, and like the breath  
Of fragrant morn that stirs each leafy bower,  
Love whispers from amid the golden shower  
Of daisies there:  
"O Life! O Love! How fair!"  
And like the song that 'scapes the sleeping bird,  
Like an Eolian harp by south winds stirred,  
"He loves me—loves me not!" those lips repeat.  
Softly as snow-flakes fall  
The petals all  
Are drifting, drifting low toward Eros' feet.  
The love-god's pleased smile  
Lights her the while,  
And yet, ere summer waned in mortal pain,  
Love hanged his harp upon a lowly bough,  
And bound the cypress round his bruised brow,  
For Faustus came.  
—Carrie E. Shoemaker.

**In Nazareth.**  
To set a foot where that of Christ once pressed,  
To place a finger on an olive limb  
Where once had lain the ardent palm of Him—  
To touch a garment that had touched His breast,  
Or kiss a strand of hair by Him caressed,  
To lay one's lip against the pebbly rim  
Of any stream or sea whereon did swim  
His wavering shadow as He paused to rest—  
This to a Christian were a joy profound!  
Yet how much greater had the glory been  
To see reflected in His clear blue eye  
One's very image,—or to catch the sound  
Of one slight accent from His lips serene,  
Ere yet around Him closed the earthly sky!  
—James Newton Matthews.

**At Christmas-time.**  
At Christmas-time last year,  
So many friends that now are gone were here;  
So many hopes were glowing then unspoken;  
So many faiths were strong that now lie broken,  
And loving hearts that trusted with that fear,  
At Christmas-time last year!

**At Christmas-time this year**  
So many of us find the world a drear  
And barren desert, wherein blooms no rose,  
With mountain peaks surrounding it, whose  
snows  
Have chilled our hearts and turned life's foliage  
sere,  
At Christmas-time this year!

**At Christmas-time next year!**  
Who knows what changing fortunes may be near!  
Take courage then! Our night shall turn to day;  
From brightening skies the clouds must roll away,  
And faith, and love, and hope shall all be here,  
At Christmas-time next year!  
—Church Union.

**December.**  
December, thou whose hallowing hands  
Do shuddering seas and hardening lands  
Set as a sacramental sign  
The seal of Christmas felt on earth,  
As witness toward a new year's birth,  
Whose promise makes thy death divine,  
The crowning joy that comes of thee  
Makes glad all grief on land or sea.  
—A. C. Swinburne, in Magazine of Art.

**The National Council's Short Skirts.**  
New York Sun.  
Whether they could ever be as dignified  
as long draperies is another and a doubtful  
matter. Of a certainty they do not render  
femininity so imposing. They might  
be youth, but would they not impair the  
matronly dignity? The thought of them  
does violence to our associations, and con-  
flicts with our conceptions of woman's  
character. Would a matron of middle age,  
trailing along the streets in a gown reach-  
ing little below her knees, be a sight that  
would tend to elevate the popular appre-  
ciation of womanhood? But if Mrs. Sew-  
all's reform is to prevail, it must com-  
mand itself first to the taste of such  
matrons. They are the social leaders, and  
all fashions get their impress from them.  
If Queen Victoria would consent to  
adopt Mrs. Sewall's short skirts for public  
use, the reform would be established.  
Still, it will be interesting to see how Mrs.  
Sewall, and her gentle sister reformers,  
will look at the Chicago fair.

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